489 up or down the Nilgiri escarpment by hand, on horseback, or on bullock carts (Ward 1821: lxv). With such a restriction it was impossible for Badagas to export fresh vegetables to other parts of India, even had they been interested in doing so (Grigg 1880: 480).

In 1899 a railway was completed from Coimbatore to Coonoor, and by 1913 it reached as far as Ootacamund. Its construction involved Badaga contractors and Badaga laborers, giving to many their first experience of earning cash by working. When the 1914-1918 War began there was thus a quick and easy means of exporting fresh vegetables to all parts of India, and even beyond.

During the years between the two wars trucks became a common phenomenon in the District, and roads were improved to accommodate them. Some of the Badagas who became middlemen purchased trucks to improve their business.

At this time a local bus service also began. In the years since World War II the network of bus routes has become so complex that there is no longer a Badaga hamlet anywhere which is more than three miles from a bus route leading to one of the towns. 57 different routes are now traveled within the Nilgiris District, some by several competing companies.

The existence of buses in such profusion has helped the Badagas in more matters than marketing. They are now able to go to town frequently -- typically once a week -- and thus their children can attend high school and even college without having to lose their close contact with the home. Literacy and newspapers have spread, too, with the help of the easy transportation system. Literacy today is quite as high in the rural population of the Nilgiris as it is in Madras City, according to a survey which I conducted: in 1963, 77.2% of Badaga males, and 51.8% of females, were literate; whereas in 1961 69.6% of Madras City males, and 48.2%